

**SUMMARY OF THE
ACCREDITATION PROCESS COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 10, 2002**

The Accreditation Process Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Wednesday, July 10, 2002, at 9:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) as part of the Eighth Annual NELAC Meeting in Tampa, Florida. The meeting was led by Chairperson Gleason Wheatley of the State of Kentucky, Department for Environmental Protection. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss items of importance as identified in the Committee's previously distributed agenda.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Mr. Wheatley introduced himself as Chairperson of the Accreditation Process Committee and welcomed the participants. The Committee members then introduced themselves.

CHAPTER 4.0 ACCREDITATION PROCESS

MODIFICATIONS TO SECTION 4.0

Mr. Wheatley reported that numerous proposed changes are being made to section 4.0 of the Standards. Issues arose from NELAC 7i regarding a mobile laboratory's accreditation. Some of the attending NELAP AAs at NELAC 7i had noted that their states would like the option to accept multiple mobile laboratories under one accreditation. There are also many secondary accrediting authorities that would like the ability to accept group accreditation for mobile laboratories coming into their states. Originally, if a mobile laboratory stayed in a given state, accreditation would be up to the primary accrediting authority of that state to decide whether mobile laboratories needed separate accreditation or whether they could be accredited as a group. The proposed changes will show that the primary accrediting authority has the option to decide whether separate or group accreditation is permissible and 4.0.c will give that same option to the secondary accrediting authorities. These changes allow each state to have some control within their jurisdiction. If a mobile laboratory wants to operate in another state, the laboratory needs to check with that state's accrediting authority as to whether or not it would accept multiple accreditations.

Many attendees agreed that this revision to the Standards in Chapter 4 is appropriate. An attendee addressed the issue that laboratories are primarily accredited from the state's accrediting authority. However, what will happen when there is a federal accrediting authority again? Mr. Wheatley commented that work done at federal facilities fall under the states authority to satisfy the state in which the facility is operating. If a laboratory is accredited, whatever is acceptable to that state now will also apply in the future.

MOBILE LABORATORY AND FIELD MEASUREMENTS

Mr. Wheatley reported that the Accreditation Process Committee met with the Field Activities Committee in a joint teleconference to discuss the definitions of *mobile laboratory* and *field measurement*. It was decided that the Accreditation Process Committee would propose the definition for a *mobile laboratory* and the Field Activities Committee would propose a definition for *field measurements*.

A representative of the Field Activities Committee reported the definition for *field measurement* that his committee is proposing:

A field measurement is the determination of physical properties or chemical constituents that are measured on-site as close as possible in time and space to the matrices being sampled/measured following accepted test methods. This testing is performed in the field outside of a fixed laboratory or outside in an enclosed structure that meets the requirements of a mobile laboratory.

The definition that Accreditation Process is proposing for *mobile laboratory* is:

A portable enclosed structure with electrical power and an environmental control system within which testing is performed by analysts. Examples are trailers, vans, etc., configured to house testing instruments and personnel.

Discussion ensued and comments arose concerning some of the language used in the *mobile laboratory* definition. A comment was made that the phrase “electric power” does not apply to all mobile laboratories because some laboratories use battery operated power. A suggestion was proposed that “appropriate power” would be more suitable. A suggestion was also made that the phrase “testing equipment” may be more appropriate language than “testing instruments”. Another comment was made that “etc.” should be removed from the definition. Discussion continued and suggestions were presented by Committee members and attendees. The final definition of *mobile laboratory* agreed upon was:

A portable and enclosed structure with necessary and appropriate accommodations and environmental conditions as described in Chapter 5 within which testing is performed by analysts. Examples include but are not limited to trailers, vans and skid-mounted structures configured to house testing equipment and personnel.

The final definition of *mobile laboratory* will be submitted to Chapter 1, Program Policy and Structure, for inclusion in the glossary.

BALANCE OF CHAPTER 4

Mr. Wheatley reported that a change was made in response to a suggestion from an accrediting authority concerning 4.4.4, which now reads:

If an environmental laboratory wishes to withdraw from NELAP in total or in part it must notify the primary accrediting authority in writing no later than 30 calendar days before the end of the accreditation year.

Some laboratories had a problem with the language concerning 30 calendar days. There was some confusion as to whether a laboratory had to wait the 30 days if they were ready before then. Discussion ensued and it was agreed to change 4.4.4 to read:

If an environmental laboratory wishes to withdraw from NELAP in total or in part it must notify the appropriate primary and/or secondary accrediting authorities in writing.

NEW BUSINESS

An issue was raised regarding 4.1.8, merging or consolidating laboratories, and how they can move from one building to another and retain separate accreditation but cannot combine two or more laboratories under one accreditation. A suggestion was presented that language be added in 4.1.8 to address merging laboratories. Various attendees reiterated this issue of merging and separating laboratories and Mr. Wheatley proposed that the subject be added to future issues for the Committee to address.

Bruce Woods, EPA, reported that he received a memo from EPA Region 9 concerning NELAC accreditation for methods that are not yet approved by the EPA, such as wastewater and drinking water regulations. Mr. Woods suggested that explicit language be generated regarding this issue, making it clear to the laboratories concerning NELAC accreditation versus regulatory method requirements. Mr. Wheatley commented that a laboratory can be accredited for whatever it desires to be accredited for, if available under NELAP. The laboratory must also consult with the accrediting authority to make sure that the appropriate method is being used for which the laboratory is seeking accreditation. Mr. Wheatley proposed that this subject concerning NELAC methods versus regulatory method requirements be added to future issues for the Committee to address.

A comment was presented concerning section 4.1.3.b in regards to the specific language that a laboratory's accreditation can be revoked if it fails to meet the requirements after the second submission of a corrective action report. There is no corresponding reference in the Standards regarding action a laboratory can take following a second denial. Mr. Wheatley commented that in order to be accredited the first time, all deficiencies must be corrected to receive accreditation. Once a laboratory is accredited and a problem arises, the laboratory will have the opportunity to correct that problem.

CLOSING

Mr. Wheatley announced that he is rotating off the Committee and that this would be his last meeting with the Committee. Robert Pullano, not present at this meeting, will also be rotating off.

Mr. Wheatley opened the floor for nominations for the new Chairperson. The nomination of Susan Wyatt to the position of Chairperson of the Accreditation Process Committee was put to the floor. The nomination was seconded and Ms. Wyatt accepted the nomination. Mr. Wheatley announced that Ms. Wyatt will be the new Chairperson of the Accreditation Process Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

**ACTION ITEMS
ACCREDITATION PROCESS COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 10, 2002**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
07/10/02	Merging laboratories and their accreditation.	OPEN
07/10/02	Splitting laboratories and their accreditation.	OPEN
07/10/02	Language concerning NELAC accreditation and the legal requirements for methods and clarifying the NELAC accreditation for methods versus regulatory method requirements.	OPEN

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ACCREDITATION PROCESS COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 19, 2002**

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